EARLY REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM IN BIHAR

BY

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In the present article an attempt is proposed to be made, on the basis of my recent studies of some fresh records on early revolutionary nationalism, to analyse the influences operating on Bihar prior to the bomb episode of Muzaffarpur in 1908, and the circumstances obtaining in the province which helped the spread of the movement. Such a study will not only provide us with the right perspective but will also enable us to understand the nature and extent of the movement.

The Sedition Committee of 1918, which had been appointed by the Government of India "to investigate and report on the nature and extent of the Criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India", dealt with the subject in a separate Chapter entitled, Revolutionary Crime in Bihar and Orissa". As the Committee was concerned with the problem of the whole of India, it has necessarily devoted about four printed pages only to Bihar and Orissa. The explanation for this scant attention, as given in the report, is that the early history of the revolutionary movement in Bengal from the years 1906 to 1911 includes the narrative of events in Bihar and Orissa. But this statement is qualified by the following words—"but in fact concerned that Province little".[1] After briefly touching the Muzaffarpur bomb episode (1908), The Nimez episode, and some incidents of the B. N. College, Patna and the T. N. J. College, Bhagalpur, the Comittee concluded that the province of Bihar and Orissa had been slightly affected by the movement. The Committee, however, did not make any mention of the special circumstances obtaining in Bihar then, which really accounted for the limited extent of the movement.

The author of the history of Freedom Movement in Bihar has devoted some forty pages to the early phase of the movement, which came to a close about the year 1920. In some respects he was in a very advantageous position. The country had achieved freedom and many leaders of this movement were alive to tell him their own side of the story. But he attempted to write a book of over two thousand pages singly and at one stretch—a superhuman effort, no doubt, but certainly too much for a man, who was also otherwise burdened with heavy responsibilities.

1 Indian Sedition Committee Report (1918), p. 87.

And naturally he could not give us that much of satisfaction which one could reasonably expect from a scholar of his eminence.

The failure of the Indian Revolt of 1857 indeed dealt a heavy blow to the Nation, enveloping the country with a general depression, but the efforts to overthrow British rule never ceased. True, the existing circumstances necessitated these activities to be carried on underground and within limited scopes, but whenever there was an opportunity, a revolt was attemped, The first world War (1914-18) provided a grand opportunity for the underground workers to accelerate their activities on a large scale. We are all familiar with the remote as well as the immediate causes of the revolutionary movement in India—such as the Japanese victory in the Russo—Japanese War (1905-06), the writings and speeches, of Tilak, Arbindo and Swami Vivekanand, partition of Bengal etc. etc. But here we are concerned with that phase of the movement which originally started in Bengal following the partition of the Province (i. e. 1905) and spread over to the region of Bihar and other Provinces also. The necessary link was provided by the domiciled Bengalis. These Bengalis had come to settle in this part of the Bengal Province in the wake of English education. They early took up English education with the result that they filled almost all the posts under the government then open to Indians. Bihar, formed a part of Bengal till 1911. The Biharis remained averse to English education for a long time. So long Persian was official language the Moslems and Kayasthas generally held the government offices. But when English was made the language of official transaction the English educated Bengalis alone could fulfil the necessary qualification for employment in government offices. Even for the few government district schools in Bihar the services of Bengali teachers had to be requisitioned. We have it on record that the Bengali teachers were not very eager to serve at so distant a place from their home. Sometimes extra-allowance had to be given to induce them for services in far-off places. For the due discharge of their duties these Bengalis had necessarily to remain away from their native places for long years. They were practically cut off from their people. After retiring from their services most of them did not find it easy to return to their native villages. In the course of their service life they had cultivated new circles of friends and acquaintances. In many cases they had invested their life's earning locally. On the other hand, for obvious reason, their close relatives at home were also not very eager for their return. Thus there came to exist Bengali *tolas* or *Mohalla*, in almost all the district towns of Bihar. The Bengalis, for the same reason of convenience to the British rulers, found

employment in estates when they fell under the court of Ward's administration. They thus settled in the interior places also.

With the passage of time English education made some advance in Bihar also. The Kayasthas and Moslems were in the forefront. They had to face competition with the Bengalis. These were the people who suffered most due to change of official language from Persian to English. Hence they set up an agitation for separation of Bihar from Bengal and gave the slogan "Bihar for Biharis". Their idea was ridiculed in the beginning by the British rulers, but assertion of greater independence on the part of Bengalis and events of the closing years of 19th century and opening years of the 20th century brought about a change in their attitude. They rather helped the movement to gain momentum. As a result some of the Biharis got higher posts in the Executive and Judiciary. The partition of Bengal, which had so profoundly agitated the mind of the Bengalis, was viewed with quite indifference by our Bihar leaders. Some of our Moslem leaders were rather happy over the creation of the Moslem majority Province of East Bengal. They were opposed to any undoing of the parition. And finally when Bihar was separated from Bengal there was unfortunately a long-drawn controversy over the domicile issue. It created much bitterness. Although there were loud professions of cooperation and brotherhood on both sides, each party tried to pull the matter to extremes. In such a state of things cooperation between Bengalis and Biharis in carrying out the scheme of revolutionary nationalism was well-neigh impossible. So the movement remained confined to the Bengali pockets in Bihar.

This should not, however, lead us to the conclusion that the Biharis were one and all loyal to the British rulers and there existed no anti-British feeling among them. We know the significant role of Bihar in the revolt of 1857. The repressive measures that followed the rising, however, could not cow down the spirit of the people here. The radicals among the Moslems, the Wahabis, continued their effort to overthrow the British government in India till the last. Besides, there was another section of the Moslems who looked upto foreign Moslem powers for help in their struggle with the government. Thus about the year 1880 was discovered in Bihar the existence of Indo-Turkish collaboration on a large scale. It was found that collection of funds for the aid of Turkey (during the Russo-Turkish war) had been going on since 1876 in the various parts of Bihar as well as outside. Azmat Ali, a resident of Saran district and a member of the Calcutta bar, was the first delegate to visit Turkey ostensibly with the purpose of enquiring into the adminis-

tration of the funds sent from India. But he had actually gone there for establishing secret contact between India and Turkey. A number of organisations, engaged in anti-British collaboration with Turkey, were established in other parts of the country also. *The Anjuman-i-Islam* was perhaps the chief among these. The ex-Prime Minister of Turkey Osman Pasha, was the Chief Patron of the movement. The Sultan of Turkey lent his spiritual authority in the furtherance of the movement. With this end in view an Urdu newspaper, the *Paik-e-Islam*, was started at Constantinople. Similarly about the year 1913 the *Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-Kaba* was set up with the ostensible purpose of preserving the sanctity of Kaba and other holy places of Islam. But soon it was found that some 700 Indian pilgrims at Mecca and Jeddah, were bidding their time there to fight for the faith. A number of Anjumans connected with the *Khuddam-i-Kaba* had been set up in various parts of Bihar, and were engaged in raising funds etc. for the Turko-Balkan War. Abdul Wahid Aba of Muzaffarpur was a prominent worker and had proceeded to Constantinople in connection with the War. Gaya, Jahanabad, and Purnea were important centres of the *Khuddam-i-Kaba* During the days of the Kanpur Mosque case (1913), Mazharul Haque came into close association with some of the leaders of this Pan-Islamic movement. And in 1914, on his way back from England where he had gone along with others as a delegate of the Indian National Congress, Mazharul Haque visited Constantinople where he was accorded an enthusiastic welcome by the young Turk party and the organisers of Red Crescent Society. He was also granted an interview with the Sultan. He was also associated with the trilingual paper *Jahan-i-Islam* (started in Constantinople about May 1914), which had been proscribed by the British government. All this clearly proves that at least a section of the Moslems in Bihar had not reconciled themselves to the state of things and relentlessly carried on their hostile activities towards the alien rulers. Naturally, with the Kanpur Mosque agitation of 1913 in the background, the local government was very apprehensive of the activities of this section of Moslems when the World War broke out. In their very first fortnightly report the local government wrote the following to the Government of India. "To the general attitude (favourable to the government) there is possibility of one small exception in the activities of a small intriguing section of the Patna Muhammadans headed by a gentleman who has lately returned from a visit to England and spent some time at Constantinople on the return journey. There is evidence that in an underground way he has been endeavouring to poison the

minds of his co-religionists and inspire them with the belief that the interests of Turkey are bound up with the fortunes of Germany and that the sympathies of Islam should be with the latter". But the irony lies in the fact that even this section of the Biharis did not cooperate or sympathise with the Bengali revolutionaries. Mazharul Haque called it the work of "a few youthful lunatics" for whose follies the whole country had "to pay the penalty".[2] It is true that in the beginning the revolutionaries of Bengal hesitated in taking Moslem members in their organisation. But at a subsequent period when they approached the Wahabis for support they did not succeed. The Moslems lookod up more to the outside Moslem countries for help in their anti-British enterprises. Perhaps the theory of "*Darul Hurb* and Darul Islam" was responsible for this attitude. The "Hindu sympathies" were claimed to be with the government, not withstanding frontly talk and writing in time of peace, the educated Hindus are fully aware that "their welfare is inseparably bound up with the continuance of British rule."[3] Moreover, Gandhiji had asked his co-workers in Champaran to work with undivided attention so long his mission had not been fulfilled there. They were prevented from taking interest even in the Home Rule League movement sponsored by the Indian National Congress. Later the Khilafat and Non-cooperation movement assumed more prominence in the political life of the province.

So the little support that the Bengali revolutionaries got in Bihar, apart from those of the domiciled Bengalis, was from the Maharastrians, Punjabis and some Bihari School and College students. There has existed a close cultural ties between Maharastra and Mithila. Since a very long time Mithila had remained under Brahman rulers. Under these rulers Sanskrit learning received considerable patronage. The rise of the Marathas naturally produced a psychological effect on the Brahmans here. They saw the prospect of the revival of *Sanatan dharma*. The Maithil Pandits often visited the court of Maratha Chiefs and enjoyed their patronage. To the Maithil Pandit Sachal Mishra was accorded the highest honour of '*Rath-Yan*' by the Peshwa Madhav Rao Narayan.[3*] Likewise Pandit Gangadhar Misra of Karhari (dist. Gaya) and founder of the Agra College enjoyed the patronage of Madho Rao Sindhia. Whenever the pandit

2 Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India, dated 6 August, 1910.

3 Political (Special) File No. 289 of 1914.

3* *Sukti Muktāvalī*, edited by Ramanath Jha, p. 36.

visited the court he shared the throne with the Sindhia.[4] The letters of Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh of Darbhanga to the Secretary of the Poona Saavajanik Sabha show the interest with which the Maharaja viewed the activities of the Society, and also the inspiration he drew from the history of the Marathas.[5] In his *Dvitiya Swadhintar Sangram*, Bhupendra Dutt has referred to the great work of one Sakha Ram Ganesh Deoskar, whose ancestors had settled at Karun in Deoghur sub-division of Santhal Paragana in the wake of the Maratha invasion of Bengal. He was a versatile scholar and true nationalist. He had inspired many members of the Revolutionary party. He is credited with the authorship of the Bengali work, *Desher-Katha*.[6]

The Maharashtrian and Bengali professors who were working in the several Colleges of Bihar took active interest in the revolutionary activities in Bihar. Prof. Mansukhani of the G. B. B. College, Prof Jadunath Sarkar of Patna College and Prof. K. N. Mitra of B. N. College were prominent among them. Prof. Mansukhani's activities first attracted the attention of the government when he was employed in a College in Karachi. Later when he joined the B.N. College, he was reported by the Criminal Investigation Department to have been "engaged in a systematic seditious propaganda among the students" and the authorities had little doubt about his being "a thoroughly disloyal person."[7] The authorities remained watchful of his activities and when he joined the Tirhut College, Muzaffarpur, about the year 1913, the Director of Public Instruction's attention was drawn to this fact. Now that he was in an aided College, the D. P. I. was powerful enough to get him removed from the College, by the mere threat of stopping the government aid to the College. The activities of Prof. Jadunath Sarkar and Prof. K. N. Mitra will be discussed elsewhere in this paper. It will suffice for our purpose to say that the British authorities were very anxious to get rid of the Maharashtrian and Bengali professors. But their main difficulties, as mentioned in a note

4 A copy of the original correspondence regarding Pandit Gangadhar Mishra is in the Mss. collection of the Patna University Library.

5 Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh in a letter to the Secretary to Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, dated 7 March, 1882, observed, "The very name of Poona calls to our mind the almost superhuman efforts of Shivaji and the grand old Peshwas to free India from the thraldom and tyranny of Muhammadan rulers and four Satara still makes us think that in Poona at least the old spark of patriotism is not extinguished."

6 Datta, K. K., History of Freedom Movement in Bihar, p. 117.

7 D. O. No. 902 |T, dated 3 April, 1913, from H. Le Mesurier to F. N. Fischer.

of H. Le Mesurier, dated the 1st April, 1913, were the following :—

"The habit of forming cliques is engrained in Bengalis serving away from their homes and in the second place it must be remembered that qualified Biharis and Oriyas are very difficult indeed to get. The University requires that professors of first grade Colleges should be M. As. and it objects very strongly to the appointment of 3rd Class M. As. There is, I believe, hardly a Bihari or Oriya who got the M. A. in a higher class than the 2nd or 3rd. Certainly there are none to be obtained on the terms which the college has been offering. In the circumstances it was inevitable that the staff should consist either of Bengalis or Marhattas or other classes who have come under similar political suspicion....The new scale of pay should make it possible to select professors from a wider field, but as I have already indicated in a note to the D. P. I.....the first thing to do is to reorganise the Governing Body and to get rid from the staff of all suspicious characters".

The existence of the famous Gurudwara of the Patna City has always provided a place of Sikh congregations. From a very early time some Sikh families have settled in different parts of Bihar. They have been much impressed by the happenings in the Punjab. So when the Ghadr party of America sent revolutionaries to India, on board the *Komagatmaru*, and the Budge Budge riot that followed in its train, the Punjabi residents in Bihar were greatly stirred. There was a rumour that the Sikh passengers of the *Komagatmaru* had mutinied because they had been required to shave their hair and beards. A number of Sikhs were arrested in various parts of the Province on suspicion that they were fugitives from the *Komagatmaru*. In the course of investigation it was found that some of the Sikhs were regular subscribers to the proscribed Ghadr journal. The name of Deb Chand Punjabi of Patna is specially mentioned in this connection.

The Bengali revolutionaries in Bihar received support from an unexpected quarter. They had the blessings of some *sadhus* like Babaji Thakur Das of Dhaniapahari (Gaya) and Puran Das. As a matter of fact Babaji Thakur Das was one of the earliest organisers of the movement in Bihar. It is just likely that they were in fact revolutionaries working in the guise of *sadhus*.

ORIGIN OF THE MOVEMENT IN BIHAR

Contrary to the general belief the revolutionary movement appears to have begun in Bihar at least some years before the Muzaffarpur Bomb episode, if not earlier. True, the Muzaffarpur episode was the first manifestation of this movement in Bihar, and it was connected with the



Fig. 1
Late Babaji Thakur Das of Dhaniapahari

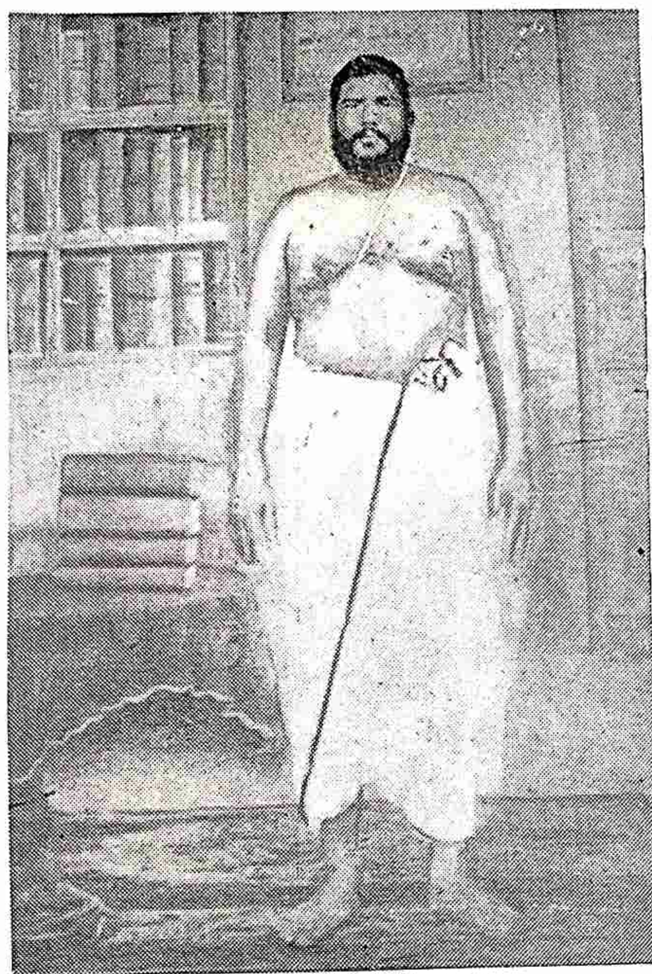


Fig. 2
Late Kedar Nath Banarji of Patna

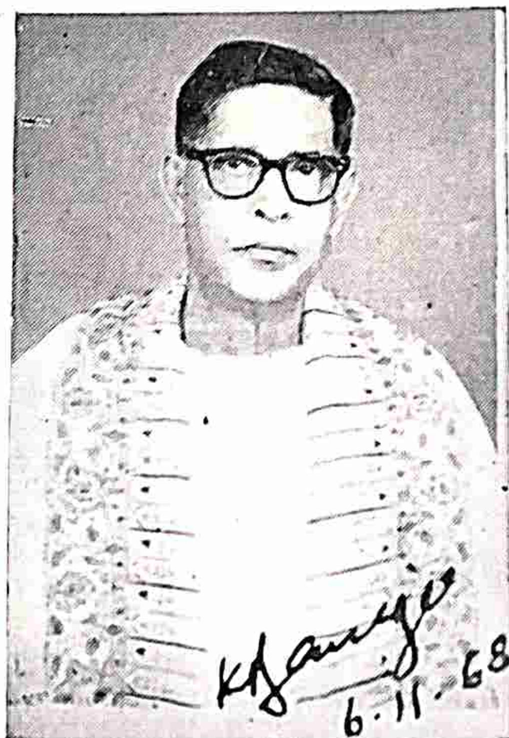


Fig. 3
Shri Kanhai Lal Banarji of
Laheriasarai

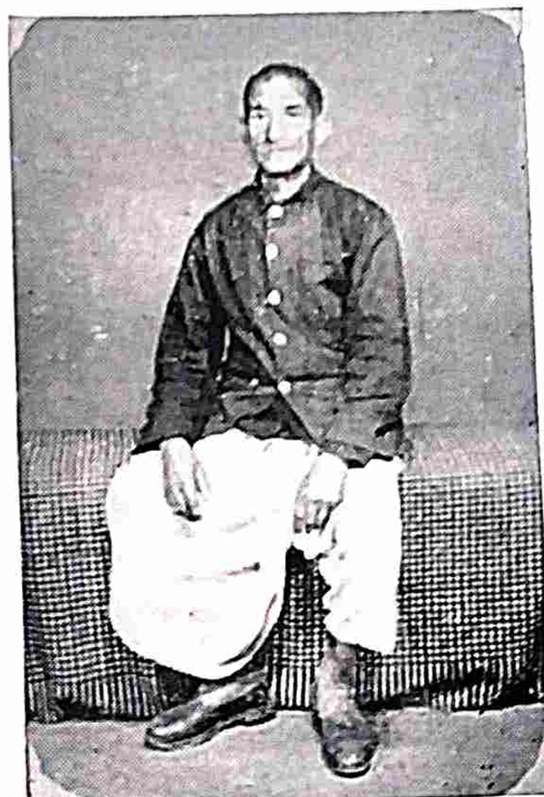


Fig. 4
Shri Shyama Prasad of Bhagalpur
(at present an employee of
Darbhanga Raj)

Dacca Anushilan Samiti. But a very significant fact about this episode is that the conspirators had waited twenty days in Muzaffarpur before throwing the bomb.[8] Prafulla Chaki, another associate of Khudi Ram Bose, found a welcome shelter in the house of a Bengali Railway employee at Samastipur even after the occurrence.[9] All this suggests that some amount of local sympathy did exist even at that early stage of the movement. Even more revealing is the fact that Prafulla Chaki had earlier visited Patna and gone to Nepal along with some other fellow workers of Patna to win over some *sadhus* to their cause. So it may reasonably be concluded that the revolutionary movement in Bihar and Bengal started at about the same time. It is quite a different thing that Bengal then included Bihar also. The early history of the Revolutionary Nationalism in Bihar moves round the activities of the trio—consisting of Dr. J. N. Mitra, Babaji Thakur Das and Kedar Nath Banerji. An inhabitant of Bankipore Dr. J. N. Mitra was an F. A. of the Calcutta University and L. M. S. of the Calcutta Medical College. His brother, Binod Bihari Mitra, was a pleader. After obtaining the medical licence he set up his practice at Bankipore. He had a good practice, but he soon threw himself into the Revolutionary movement and changed his name and dress. He was now Swami Brahmanand and wore the robe of a *sanyasi*. He became a disciple of Babaji Thakur Das of Dhaniapahari in Gaya, who was a most influential member of the Sadhu community in India. Babaji Thakur Das possessed considerable wealth and owned houses in Gaya, Dacca, Banaras, Amritsar, Bharoch, Nasik and many other places in India. Kedar Nath Banarji was a pleader in Patna.

To propogate his revolutionary views Dr. J. N. Mitra established a newspaper called *The Motherland*. He possessed the necessary experience as he happened to be earlier a correspondent to the *Bengalee* and *The Amrit Bazar Patrika*. He had written many articles against government officials and dealt with political and social matters. On the staff of the *Motherland* were Fanindra Nath Mitra[10] and Satish Chandra Sarkar.[11] While conducting the paper Dr. Mitra inserted an advertisement calling for young Indians who would consent to being trained as political missionaries. It was reported that the boys who responded to this advertisement were, after selection by Dr. Mitra, sent

8 The Bengal Administration under Sir Andrew Fraser1903-1908, p. 21.

9 Datta, K. K., History of the Freedom movement in Bihar, p. 113.

10 Fanindra Nath Mitra was afterwards convicted for sedition in connection with the *Jugantar*.

11 Satish Chandra figured prominently in the Howrah Gang case.

to Babaji Thakur Das' *Math* at Dhaniapahari where they were taught the *Gita*, converted into *sadhus*, and sent off on political missions, the ultimate object of which was the overthrow of the British government of India.

In the capacity of training youths for the service of the motherland, the doctor met Prafulla Chaki (afterwards connected with first anarchical outrage at Muzaffarpur), and it was with Prafulla Chaki, Upendra Banarji, Ullaskar Dutt, Satish Chandra Sarkar and Bibhuti Bhushan Sarkar that the doctor went to Nepal on an unsuccessful mission to convert to the cause the Sadhus who gathered at Dhanishahi.[12]

The finances for the Scheme were supplied by Kedar Nath Banarji and Punit Lal, Manager of Lahiri & Co. Dr. Mitra is also reported to have received Rs. 1400 from the wife of Kedar Nath Banarji for the purpose of starting a *Math* at Sabjibagh. In October 1907 the doctor obtained for his party the dynamite and gelignite which were subsequently discovered in the Maniktola garden. On the 9th July, 1908 he went to Hathua (Saran) accompanied by Babaji Thakur Das and some sixty *sadhus*. The Diwan of the Hathua Raj, Debendra Nath Dutta, who was his cousin, weilded great influence on the Rani. The ostensible purpose of his visit was to render spiritual aid to the restoration of the health of some ailing member of the Raj family. Early in September he went to Nasik and Bombay, accompanied by Kedar Nath Banarji. In 1909 he got released Priya Nath Gupta alias Mangal Chandra Gupta of Backerganj who had been arrested for his suspicious movement during the visit of the viceroy to Patna. Puran Das, a *sadhu*, stood surety for him at the instance of the doctor. For about a couple of years he was mentally sick. But in April 1911 he was in Chandernagore and was reported to have initiated a young boy, Noni Gopal De. In 1912 he came into close association of a Punjabi *sadha*, named Kailashpuri Swami *alias* Bankhandi, who was reported to have been acquainted with Lala Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh, Munshi Ram and other prominent members of the Arya Samaj.

Upto this time we do not find any evidence of the local students taking part in the revolutionary activities. In November 1912 an anonymous letter to the C. I. D. authorities drew their attention to the article on "Indian unrest" published in the *Aryan* for July 1912. Issues of this paper, the report said, were sent to Prof. Jadu Nath Sarkar (Patna College), Prof. Kamakhya Nath Mitra (B. N. College) and others. Prof. Mitra was reported to have been of extremist feelings. The informer

12 Political Department (Special) File No. 60 of 1914-18.

mentioned particularly the fact of his having delivered a lecture at the Bihar Institute on Swami Vivekanand. In August 1914 two copies of the *Jugantar* leaflet were received by the Principal of the Patna College in a cover addressed to the students of the college. In September 1915 the D. P. I. received information that copies of seditious pamphlet "Liberty, Arise and Stop Not Till The Goal Is Reached" had been sent to masters and students in schools and colleges in Patna and Bankipore. On enquiry it was found that attempts had been made to distribute the pamphlet in nine institutions in that area. In was actually in 1914 that local students participation in the Revolutionary movement came to the notice of the authorities. Among the papers seized in connection with the Raja Bazar Bomb case (December 1913) a list was found containing some names in cipher. One of these was Hiranmay Banarji's. Hiranmay was an intimate friend of Sachindra Sanyal, Secretary of the Young Men Association, Banaras. Certain letters addressed to Hiranmay Banarji were intercepted in the post. There were two letters written by some individual from Bankipur. The writer's name was not disclosed, but from enquiries made in this connection several interesting facts came to notice. Some members of the Calcutta Revolutionary Samiti had stayed with Basudeo Bhattacharji of Moradpur when they had visited Patna about the middle of November. About this time two Bengali Youths Dinesh Chandra Ray and Priyanath Dutt of Barisal and Faridpur respectively came to Bankipur and stopped with Phanindra Nath Bhattacharya, a P. W. D. overseer living in the same Moradpur Mohalla. Subsequently they were taken to Rohni Kumar Sen, a cousirn of the political suspect Biswa Ranjan Das Gupta. The Youths left Bankipur after the viceroy's visit.

Further investigations revealed that Bankim Chandra Mitra of the B. N. College was the writer of the letters addressed to Hiranmay Banarji. Bankim had passed the entrance examination from the T. K. Ghose Academy. In June 1912 he got himself admitted into the Patna Medical School. But in November he left the School and joined the B. N. College. At the time of admissson into the above institutions he had given differrent home addresses. He was actually a resident of 24 parganas. He had been living with Prof. Jadunath Sarkar of the Patna College. Abani Nath Sarkar, the son of Prof. Sarkar, was a very close friend of his. Akhil Chandra Das Gupta of Palong (dist. Faridpur), and a student of the 4th year class of the B. N. College, was one of his close associates in the revolutionary movement. Akhil was living in the house of Kaviraj Raj Mohan Rai. On February 13, 1914 their houses were searched.

Several of Vivekanand's works, Bolton's life of Mazzini[13] and inflamatory literature of a similar nature, several photographs of Vivekanand and certain notes and accounts in connection with a local Society called the Hindu Boys' Association, were found. From the seized papers and the statement of Bankim it seemed that a branch of some secret Society had been started at Bankipur, and that there was an intention of spreading the movement among Bihari students by forming a Hindu Boys Association on the lines of the Vivekanand Society.

These papers, however, do not give clear indication of any connection between these students, revolutionary workers and Dr. J. N. Mitra's group. In the statement of Bankim Chandra Mitra, dated the 17th February, 1914, there is a reference only to Kedar Nath Banarji with whom the emissary of Sachindra Nath Sanyal had halted in Patna. As the statement gives many interesting particulars regarding the nature and working of the Revolutionary Society it is quoted in extenso : "During last Puja vacation I went to Moghul Sarai to stay with my brother, while staying with him, I went over to Benaras by train and proceeded on foot to Dasaswamedh Ghat. I was sitting at the Ghat when Sachindra Nath Sanyal came and sat at a short distance from me. After a little while he asked me why I was sitting there. I told him I had come from Moghul Sarai for a walk. He asked me where I was living and I told him that I was at present at Bankipur. He then asked me if I had read any of Swami Vivekanand's books and I replied that I had read 2 or 3 of his books. He advised me to read more of them, and said that if I wanted any books, he could lend me same. He then went on to give me a lecture on the immortal soul, pointing out that death was merely a change from one state to another. If one could realise that the soul was immortal, then one could dare anything freely, to do what he thinks is good. He took my address at Moghul Sarai and at Bankipur. He pointed out how our countrymen had fallen and how other countries had gained their independence. He told me his name but not his address, saying that it was not necessary for me to know it.

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13 This book was annotated by Sachindra Sanyal and bore his name also. On page 34 there were underlined sentences, with a pencil note on the margin "Education through Writings". The underlined sentences were "Its writings, smuggled into every corner of the land, moved many a young thinker to a passionate resolve that bore fruit in after time". Another underlined sentence was "Here are we", said Jacobe Ruffini to his fellow-Conspirators at Genoa.", five very youngmen, with but limited means, and we are called on to do nothing less than overthrow an established government."

I went back to Moghul Sarai. He told me that he would come and see me on the next day and bring me a book to read.

On the next day about 3 P. M. he came to see me at my brother's house. He called me out, and we went into a field in front of my brother's house. He gave me a book, the life of Mazzini by Bolton. His name was written on the book. He told me to read the book carefully. When I find that you are worthy, I shall admit you into our Society. This Society, he told us, is spread all over India. I asked him for details and he told me that I could not learn so soon. I understood that he referred to an Anarchist Society.

He told me he would test me with small deeds before I should be entrusted with greater ones and admitted permanently into the Society. I asked him how I was to return the book. He told me not to be anxious about it either one of his men would come down to Bankipur for the book, or if I could go to Benaras and meet him at Dasaswamedh Ghat. I asked him how many persons belonged to the Society. He replied 1000 to 2000. We parted, and I stayed a few days more at Moghul Sarai, finally returning to Bankipur.

I have been to Benares several times before. On one occasion Akhil went with me, we both went to Bindhyachal. I left Akhil there and came back. I took Akhil then to leave him. He could not go himself, as he spoke Hindi imperfectly. This was during the vacation, but after the Pujas. Akhil stayed at Bindhyachal during the whole of the vacation, with Probhat Chandra Ghosh.

In the 3rd week of November a Bengali youth named Birendra Nath Das came to the B. N. College and asked for me. It was during the English class. I came out to him. He said "let us go to the banks of the Ganges, I have some private talk for your ears". We went. He asked me if I knew Sachindra Nath Sanyal of Benaras and on my answering in the affirmative, he said that he had come from him.

He said that I had promised to do some work for him and I admitted the fact. I asked him what he wanted me to do, whereupon he showed me some Yugantar leaflets and asked me to post them. I thought he meant by "post" that I should stick them up on walls. I read one of the leaflets and then refused to post them, saying that I was afraid to do so. Birendra thereupon get annoyed and said that this was how I showed my desire to help. He said to me that if I would not do this, would I at least give names of persons to whom he could send the leaflet and prominent places where he could stick them up. I gave him the following names—

1. Jagdish Chandra Ray (1st year student B. N. College, House of Sona Lal Bose).

2. Nageshwari Prashad (Prof. of History B. N. College).

3. Amarendra Nath Bose (B. Sc. student of Patna College. House of Gobind Chandra Mitter).

4. Jagat Yoti Ghose (2nd year, Patna College. House of Gobind Chandra Mitter).

5. Shamakant Banarji (Teacher, Anglo-Sanskrit School).

6. Gobardhan Prasad (4th year, Patna College).

Birendra told me that he was staying in the house of Kedar Nath Banarji, pleader, I asked him his home address. He replied that he was a Sanyasi, and had no home. He was not dressed like a Sanyasi. From his speech, I gathered that he was an eastern Bengal man. He said he was a Baidya by caste. He was clean shaven, black and short, age about 28 or 30. He said he would meet me on the following day on the banks of the river. I met him.

He gave me Hiranmay's address and asked me to write to this address reporting the result of the posting up of the leaflets in the town. He also threatened me saying that if I spoke about these matters, my life would be in danger. Subsequently I received a "liberty" leaflet by post, which I destroyed. I then wrote a letter to Hiranmay asking him not to write anything more or send anything more.

I wrote a second letter in which I asked for an appointment for a 4th year student. I meant Akhil Chandra Das Gupta, about whom I had spoken to Birendra.

On my return to Bankipur I discussed the matter of starting a Society with my friends including Parashnath Sinha, 2nd Year student, B. N. College who lives near the Khuda Buksh Library. Parashnath has read many of Vivekanand's works and it was Parashnath's idea that we should form an association known as the Hindu Boys Association.

Amongst the organisers were myself, Parashnath, Gobardhun, Shamakant Banarji and Akhil. Parashnath's idea in starting this Society was that Bihari boys could not understand Bengali songs at the Hari Sabha.

In the Hindu Boys Association both Biharis and Bengalis could discuss Vivekanand's works and teachings in English, a language which both classes could speak. This Association has not been formed yet."

In September 1915 Bankim was arrested in connection with the Banaras conspiracy case and was eventually sentenced to three years rigorous imprisionment under section 121 A.I.P.C. Subsequently it was

found that his friend Sudhir Kumar Sinha, a nephew of Prof. Kamakhya Nath Mitra, had been on most intimate terms with the members of the Banaras conspiracy and met Rash Behari Bose there. Sudhir twice visited Dinapore to tamper with the Indian troops there......the last occasion being to tell them that the date of rising had been postponed.

Raghubir Singh, a student of the T. K. Ghose Academy and friend of Bankim Chandra Mitra, was the writer of several of the covers in which liberty leaflets were distributed in September, 1915. Raghubir was sent to Allahabad to tamper with the troops there. One Prafulla Kumar Biswas, a student who joined the B. N. College in 1915 and left it in 1916 took Raghubir to Calcutta, from where he was sent on to Allahabad. Two other students of the B. N. College, Atul Chandra Mazumdar and Shyam Nath Jha, were also members of the Revolutionary Society.

The activities of Prof. Kamakhya Nath Mitra and Prof. Jadunath Sarkar also came in for severe criticism in the official notes. Prof. Kamakhya Nath Mitra was reported to have been "poisoning the minds of students and others with anti-British views". Prof. Jadunath Sarkar was believed to have written an anticle in the Amrit Bazar Patrika on 29th October, 1914 criticising certain actions of the government with regard to Bankim Chandra Mitra. On the 31st October 1915 Prof. Sarkar presided over the third anniversary meeting of the Buxar Young Men's Association in the compound of the Buxar H. E. School. The following official comments on this incident are worth noticing—

H. M.—The Buxar H. E. School seems to require careful attention. We already have an eye on Prof. Jadunath Sarkar, friend of Bankim Chandra who was convicted in the Banaras conspiracy case. I think it would be well if D. P. I. gave him privately a solemn warning.

H. H. should see.

Sd. Illegible, 11. 3. 16.

I agree though I doubt if it will do much good. Jadunath Sarkar is a very clever man and used to be thought a great deal of by the late Principal Mr. Russell who was rather sceptical about his political wrong headedness. There does not seem to be much doubt about it however,".

Sd/-E. A. G. (Edward A. Gait)

11. 3. 16.

Nripendra Kumar Bose was another Professor of the B. N. College who was also suspected of being connected with revolutionary movements. He was an associate of Murari Moham Chaudhri, a member of the Howrah party. He was reported to have accompanied Murari to Howrah railway station on the night of the 30th June, 1916, the date on which the

Deputy Superintendent Basant Kumar Chatterji was murdered. The authorities wanted to take some action against him. But he bore a high character locally and the Principal naturally shrank from the responsibility of asking him to resign. It was thought advisable to await a suitable opportunity for the same. To get rid of the suspected students—Anil Chandra Mazumdar, Shyam Nath Jha and Sheo Kumar—it was suggested that their guardians should be advised to withdraw their wards. As a measure of precaution it was suggested that the names of all the non-Bihari students admitted into the local Colleges should be given to the police for such enquiries as they might consider necessary. But D. P. I. who was consulted on this point was of the view that "the police should rarely be brought into direct connection with the Colleges".[14] And on the establishment of the Patna University the Vice-Chancellor might very well call for a list of such students from every College of the University. He would then have the necessary knowledge and, if the police liked to consult him they would be at liberty to do so.

BHAGALPUR.

Bhagalpur was another very important centre of revolutionary movement in Bihar. It appears to have been the nerve centre from where the movement was controlled in the rest of Bihar, excepting at Patna. Of course, they had some contact with Patna group also but they appear to have worked independently. From the evidences in our possession in the form of statements of arrested members, reports, etc. it appears that the members of Jatin Mukherji's party and the Dacca Anushilan Samiti had combined, and accelerated their activities about the year 1915. Rebati Charan Nag, Monindra Nath Mitra alias Scholar, Jogendra Bhattacharji alias Panditji, Nalnikant Bagchi alias publisher and Priya Nath Bhattacharya alias Biharida were important members of the organisation. They were constantly on the move to guide and keep contact with organising members at other centres like Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur and Purnea. They worked mostly among the local students. The Sedition Committee Report contains two extracts from the statements of two students—one of T. N. J. College and the other of the Barari H. E. School which show the way in which local students were recruited for the revolutionary work. At the time of the arrest of Jogendra Bhattacharya a document was found among his papers which disclosed "an elaborate scheme for the perversion of whole neighbourhood through organization of students and school boys".[15] By the year 1918 most of

14 Pol. (Special) Deptt. File No. 1419 of 1916.

15 Indian Sedition Committee Report (1918), pp. 79-80.

the local members of the Bhagalpur organization were interned. Some of them were still absconding. According to the statement of an approver, Bateshwar Nath Pande, the members felt the helplessness of their situation and thought of making their best effort to do away with the C. I. D. Inspector Chatterji, whom they considered to be responsible for their troubles. "All our future prospects had been blighted for ever and that it was now our duty, the duty of all the interned men, to strongly reunite with the firm determination to carry out the object of our mission".[16] Rebati Nag absconded from Bhagalpur towards the end of 1916. Nalinikant Bagchi, who was then a student of 4th year class in the T. N. J. College, also absconded with him in the guise of a servant. Nalinikant was shot dead during an affray at Kalta Bazar, Dacca, in June 1918. But the C. I. D. authorities were convinced that the action taken against local members under the Defence of India Rules had not been sufficient to curb their activities. The Superintendent of Police, Bhagalpur, had reported that Rasha Behari Lal and Shyama Prasad could "go to any length if given opportunity and encouragement". And—"It is well known that the party leaders are never content to leave a member alone and are in the habit of approaching them and urging them to further efforts even after they have been dealt with by the police and have for a time become inactive."[17] So he urged that for the time being no relaxation of the terms of internment should be permitted in the case of any detenus connected with the Bhagalpur party.

According to this statement Rash Behari, Shyama Prasad, Chaturbhuj Marwari, Chunchun Pande, Kanhai Lal Banarji, Maheshwari Prasad, Lakshmi Prasad Tiwari, Durp Narain Pande, Ganpat Sahu, Asharfi Sukul, Murlidhar Chaudhury and Man Mohan Pande were local members of the Bhagalpur organization.

We get some additional information about the Bhagalpur centre from a report on Anath Nath Basu. Anath Nath was the son of Charu Chandra Basu, a local pleader (residing in Mansurganj mohalla) and leader of the extremist party. Anath had thus lived from his very childhood "in an atmosphere pregnant with political discussion and criticisms of government and from which it was an easy step to his joining the revolutionary party".[18] At the time of his arrest, Anath was a students of the First Year Class of the T. N J. College. He was

16 Political (special) File No. 97 of 1918.

17 Political (Special) Deptt. File No. 97 of 1918.

18 Political (Special) Deptt. File No. 123 of 1919.

formerly a member of Jatin Mukherji's party. He acted as a Post-Box for the local party. The absconders Khetra Mohan Singh alias Biren Babu, Manindra Nath Mitra alias Scholar and Rameshwar Singh paid frequent visits to him. He was closely associated with Jogendra Bhattacharji. He was equally close to Rebati Nag, Nalini Kant Bagchi and Anath Bandhu Ghose, all of whom were then organisers of the Dacca Anushilan Samiti. In the raid of Rebati Nag's house as well as the Khalifabagh house occupied by other absconders some books belonging to Anath Nath's father were also seized along with their personal effects. Some local members of the party, Kanhai Lal Banarji, Sailendra Basu and Jitendra Nath Chattarji—were his friends and co-workers. After his arrest he admitted that he had taken an active part in the affairs of the Bhagalpur branch of the Samiti. Anath Nath was finally interned at home. In 1919 he passed the I. Sc. examination in the first division. The T. N. J. College was not affiliated to the B. Sc. examination. So the government allowed him to join the Patna College. But the College authorities refused to admit him. Thereupon the local government decided to release him from internment on the security of his maternal grand father, Girish Chandra Ghose, so that he could prosecute his studies further in Calcutta.

Early in 1918 several arrests were made at Bhagalpur in connection with the extension of the Bengal Revolutionary conspiracy to that centre. Amongst the detenus was an ex-student of the Bolpur School, who was reported to have gone to Bhagalpur with the intention of preparing for the assassination of a local C. I. D. officer. In a letter, widely published, the great poet Rabindra Nath Tagore, "protested against the outrage done to an innocent student".[18*] The man was transferred to Bengal. During the same year Pandit Abhay Nath Mishra of the Marwari Pathshala and two students of the T. N. J. Collegiate School—Puran Chandra Roy and Bibhanshu Mohan Babu—were also interned. In October, 1918 there was a plot to murder an informer in Bhagalpur. But the authorities got timely information about it, and Jitesh Lahiri, a well known member of the Dacca Anushilan Samiti and District organiser of Rajshahi was arrested in the train between Sahibganj and Bhagalpur on the 8th November. He had in his possession a fully loaded revolver which he intended to use for the murder of an officer of the Police department in Bhagalpur. He was convicted under section 19 (e) and

18* Political (Special) File No. 169 of 1918.

19 (f) of the Arms Act and sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment with fine on each count.

MUZAFFARPUR.

Owing to the Bomb-episode of the 30th April 1908, resulting in the death of Mrs. Kennedy and Miss Kennedy, Muzaffarpur had already attracted public attention all over the country. The name of the martyr, Khudi Ram Bose, had spread far and wide. But we have no evidence to show that there existed any revolutionary party then at Muzaffarpur. According to a government report the revolutionary movement in Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur and Purnea had been set on foot about the year 1915, according to a plan of the Dacca Anushilan Samiti to seduce College students and recruit them for the revolutionary cause. Prafulla Das Gupta was sent, as the district organiser, to Muzaffarpur. He was the son of Jyanda Ranjan Das Gupta, a Nazir of Brahmanbaria. He was formerly living in a Calcutta mess at 164-1/1, Russa Road. He passed the Intermediate examination from St. Xavier's College, and got himself admitted in the 3rd year B. Sc. Class of the G. BB. College, Muzaffarpur. His activities came under the notice of the C. I. D. authorities in connection with the prosecution of Raghubir Singh of Patna for sedition. In his statement before the police Raghubir had named Prafulla Das Gupta alias Biru as having taken part in the Musalmanpara Bomb case. In 1914 Prafulla Das Gupta and Kshitish Banarji were sent by one Subodh to commit some Dakaity in Mymen Singh. He was one of the men selected to distribute Swadhin Bharat leaflets in Bhawanipur, Calcutta. Raghubir also knew that Prafulla Das Gupta had been sent to Muzaffarpur as a district organiser. Subsequently in November, 1916 the Bengal Intelligence Branch informed their counterpart in Bihar about the activities of Prafulla Das Gupta on the basis of the statements of three different members of the revolutionary party recently arrested. Prafulla was connected with the case of the murder of the Deputy Superintendent Basant Kumar Chatterji; the Manser pistols used in that case had been unloaded at his lodging in Calcutta.[19] He was also reported to have been present at the dakaity committed in the house of Chetan Shah at Netrokana.

Prafulla Das Gupta was arrested at Muzaffarpur on the 4th December, 1916. For sometime he was kept in Muzaffarpur jail. On instruction from the government of India he was sent to Bengal "to reside there in such place, for such period and under such conditions as the

19 Polital (Special) Department File No. 1470 of 1916.

Government of Bengal may prescribe".[20] Accordingly he was sent to Calcutta on the 25th February, 1917.

While in the Muzaffarpur Jail Prafulla was prevailed upon giving a statement. The result of the interviews of Prafulla by the Intelligence Officer which was reported on the 3rd January 1917 is very important as it shows the strong determination, absolute fearlessness and clear conscience with which the revolutionaries carried out their scheme.

"......When Prafulla Das Gupta was interviewed in the Muzrffarpur Jail he refused to make a formal statement. A series of questions were put to him by a Bengal Intelligence Branch Officer showing what was on record against him, and in reply he said he would not commit himself either one way or the other as to whether he was guilty or not, except in open court. To an officer of this department subsequently he admitted that he had joined the anarchist party after years of due deliberation and with full knowledge of the possible consequences in case of arrest. He also said from what he had heard from the Bengal Officer he felt sure he would get 15 years Rigorous Imprisonment, and challenged him to point a single instance where a dakaity by the anarchist party had put a single family into difficulty or where a violence had been used unnecessarily. Not a single farthing of the money collected by these dakaities had been spent for the comfort of the workers, every one of whom considered it a sacred trust in their hands. It was not dakaity but merely collection of money for the cause of the country. Rich people did not subscribe willingly so they were deprived of a surplus amount which would otherwise merely lie idle in their hands".

DARBHANGA

We have a single but very important document on the revolutionary activities in Darbhanga. It is a report based on the information gathered from the statements of three approvers and five interned members or detenus. The names of the approvers have not been disclosed purposely. They are simply mentioned as P. Q., S. Q and D. Q. But fortunately a very important member of the organisation, whose statement given at the time finds considerable space in this report, is still living. He is Shri Kanhai Lal Banarji of Bengali tola, Laheriasarai.[21]

20 *Ibid.*,

21 Shri Kanhai Lal Banarji is a first cousin of the late eminent physician Dr. T. N. Banarji of Patna. Shri Kanhai Lal Banarji was reading in Class VI in 1908. His father spoke very highly of the three martyrs—Khudi Ram Bose, Kanhai Lal and Satyendra Nath. About this time a stranger came to his school with some pictures of these martyrs for sale. Shri Kanhai Lal Banarji also

Following up the clues given in this report I went to Laheriasarai and to my great happiness I could meet Shri Banarji. Shri Banarji was kind enough to narrate to me the way he joined the revolutionary party and the various work that he was called upon to perform. But even he could not identify the three approvers—named as P. Q , S. Q. and D. Q. He said that one of these three was certainly Phani Singh. They could know about Phani's betrayal only after a long time. Phani Singh was appointed a scout teacher in the Northbrook School. Subsequently he went to England on government deputation and died as quite a well-to-do man. Shri Kanhai Lal Banarji, however, corrected the other names occuring in this report. This report also shows the inter-connection existing among the Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga centres. The entire report is produced below :—

"1. S. Q., a member of the party, in a statement made in June 1917, said that earlier in the year while he was staying in a house at Muzaffarpur with Biharida (Priya Nath Bhattacharji) and Jaleshwar Singh (Mani Mitra), a man came to visit them whose Society name was Doctor Saheb and who was at the time in Darbhanga town.

2. Another member P. Q. made a lengthy statement to the police in December in the course of which he gave information about a branch of the party at Darbhanga. He stated that Scholar (Mani Mitra alias Jaleswar Singh) was in charge of the organization and Nanti alias Puran Chandra Ray (interned) and Bibhanshu Basu, both of whom had absconded from Bhagalpur were in the town with him. He also stated that Kanhai Lal Banarji was originally a member of Jatin Mukharji's party at Darbhanga and had joined the Anushilan party after coming to

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purchased a few of them. That his namesake Kanhai Lal had murdered a betrayer inspired him with a strange feeling of killing the Englishmen. Often he imagined that he was the Kanhai, the martyr. Another event which stirred his mind deeply was the prize-distribution function at the Northbrook School in 1915. The headmaster of the School, Gyan Babu, asked the school boys to sing "God save the king" and to receive with the Union Jacks the District Magistrate who was to preside over the function. This created a hatred in his heart against the slavish mentality of his people. And he founded the Youngmen's Sporting Club. The members—all school boys—met every evening to play and discuss the current politics, specially the revolutionary movement in Bengal. It was arranged that each of the members should write an article on nationalism, and read it by turn. They also collected revolutionary literatures—consisting of Michael Dutt, Garibaldi, Bankim, Mazzini, Russian Revolution, Vivekanand series etc.

Bhagalpur. Through him the Darbhanga party had been amalgamated with the Anushilan Samiti at Bhagalpur.

3. Anath Nath Basu (interned), who was a member and post Box of the party at Bhagalpur, admitted in a statement dated 27 January, 1918 that he on one occasion received a parcel on behalf of the Samiti from Darbhanga, the contents of which were probably books.

4. Priya Nath Bhattacharji (alias Biharida, arrested in Patna in January 1918), made a very full statement to the United Provinces police which included a lot of information about party activities in Bihar. He stated that a memeber P. Q. who has since been accounted for, was sent among other places to Samastipur towards the end of 1916, where he recruited 8 boys to the party. In March 1917 he mentions fresh arrangements being made for carrying on the works at the various centres in pursuance of which a member who will be referred to as D. Q. was posted to Darbhanga. Later, while he was in Chapara in June 1917, he mentions Mani Mitra being sent to Darbhanga to communicate news (presumably of the surrender of Sukhdeo Pathak) to D. Q. In July he mentions a visit to Darbhanga by Mani Mitra and Nikunja Pal, D. Q., having previously came to him at Muzaffarpur. Nikunja Pal, he says, shortly afterwards returned to Bengal. In September, 1917 Darbhanga, was made the party's headquarters, and a house was taken close to the Railway Station belonging to "A Manager." In this house Purna Chandra Roy, Kartar Singh (Khetra Mohan Singh) and deponent lived. Kartar Singh used to go out on tour.

5. D. Q. who had been an important member of the organization in Bihar made a statement on 30 April 1918 disclosing what he knew of the Darbhanga and Samastipur organizations. He said he was sent by Publisher (Nalini Bagchi) with Biharida to Darbhanga in June 1917 where they engaged a house in Bara Bazar, the owner being an elderly Hindu widow. It was situated near the Bagmati river. They then returned to Muzaffarpur and on the following day deponent and Publisher (Nalini Bagchi) left for Darbhanga, breaking their journey at Samastipur where Publisher introduced him to a local member named Ganesh Prasad. They then went to Darbhanga to the house previously engaged, Publisher going away and leaving deponent there by himself. Shortly afterwards scholar came to this house and introduced him to a local memeber named Kanhai Lal Banarji or Mukharji of Bengali tola, Laheriasarai. Scholar advised him to see Kanhai frequently and through him to get to know the local members. He learnt subsequently that Kanhai was a student of the Bhagalpur College. He met him while at his

home in Darbhanga for the summer vacation of 1917. Kanhai introduced him to three members in Darbhanga.

1. Sujan Kumar Singh (alias Pipa), a Bengali living close to Kanhai's home, who was then a student of 2nd class of some local H. E. School.

2. Some Bagchi (Akhil ?), son of an engineer and a student of the Northbrook Zila School.

3. Karunamaya Sanyal, a Bengali teacher of the Heycock M. E. School.

Biharida visited Darbhanga in July and met Kanhai. He came to know that Sanyal had recruited Sujan Singh, Bagchi and Kanhai as members of Jatin Mukharji's party. Sanyal, Kanhai, Sujan and Bagchi subsequently joined the Anushilan Samiti. He mentions also Kamleshwar Prasad (Kamleshwari Charan ?) teacher in the Saraswati School and Jagannath Prasad, teacher of the Marwari School, as members of a separate revolutionary party in Darbhanga town. The former proposed to him and Scholar to establish connection with Bengal and procure arms and ammunition. Both used to visit the absconders in the Barabazar house. He mentions Ganga Prasad Agarwala, a student of the first class of the Darbhanga Raj School also as a member, and one Radha Charan Pal, who was employed under some Zamindar in Darbhanga town, as a sympathizer. The Barabazar house was at various times visited by Biharida, Publisher and Scholar. During June, he said, he used occasionally to meet Ganesh Prasad at Samastipur, but did not get to know any other members there.

6. Kanhai Lal Banarji came to notice independently as a member of the party in Bhagalpur. He was searched and examined in July 1917 but denied all connections with the party, and there being at the time very incomplete information about him, no further action was taken. Later on we came to know that he was an important figure in the Bhagalpur organization and he was arrested on 24th January 1918 and subsequently interned. On 29 January 1918 he made a partial disclosure of his connections with the party at Bhagalpur but said nothing of his activities at Darbhanga. He said however, that while a student in the Northbrook school in 1915 he started a club known as the Young Men's Sporting Club which was situated on the banks of the Beta tank in Laheriasarai. Bilat Gami, a rich man of the town, provided money. The members were :—

(1) Umar Nath Datta (Uma ?) (2) Sujan Kumar Singh. (3) Manindra Nath Lahiri. (4) Mrityunjay Mukharji. (5) Harendra Nath Ghosh (Hirendra ?) (6) Sachindra Nath Ghosh. (7) Suraj Kumar Ghosh.	All in the 1st, 2nd or 3rd Class of the Northbrook School.

(8) Narendra Nath Barat (Boral ?) Copyist.
(9) Akhil Bandhu Bagchi, said to be at Deoghur.
(10) Indra Nath De, said to have gone to Patna.

Presumably at the time all were students or School boys in Laheri-asarai. He said he started the Club with the idea of fostering a spirit of unity and patriotism but did not admit that it had any revolutionary significance. He professed that he joined the revolutionary party late when studying in the T. N. J. College, Bhagalpur. On a previous occasion, before he made the above statement admitting his connection with the Bhagalpur party, he had admitted his intimacy with Akhil Bandhu Bagchi, who, he said, was public spirited like himself. He stated that in the summar vacation of 1917 he went home and tried to initiate Akhil Bandhu Bagchi as he had all the necessary qualifications for membership but failed as the boy's father kept him confined to his house.

7. Puran Chandra Ray, who was arrested with Khetra Mohan Singh and Dinesh Biswas at Muzaffarpur on 11 April 1918 in a statement dated 13 May 1918, which was by no means a complete disclosure, mentions being taken from Arrah to Darbhanga by Ranga Lal apparently during the spring of 1917 where he remained with Priya Nath Bhattacharji who was already in the house. The house was built of mud and was within a garden close to a pond near the Dharmashala. Mani Mitra used to visit him there.

8. A Muzaffarpur member, Dhirendra Mohan Datta, in a statement dated 17 April 1918 to the Calcutta Police said that he had heard of a branch of the party at Darbhanga.

9. Priya Nath Bhattacharji in a subsequent statement dated 23 June 1918 said that a contractor named Suresh Chandra Mukharji in Bengali tola Laheriasarai, was a member of the party. He said that Suresh's younger brother Pipa, Manindra Nath Lahiri and Dineshwar Mishra of Darbhanga and Achutananda Das and Suraj Narayan Jha of Jhanjharpur in Darbhanga district had been recruited to the party also. In a later statement to the Bengal I. B. on the 10 October 1918, he

mentioned Mani Mitra communicating with him through their Post Box Manindra Lahiri of Laheriasarai.

10. Priya Nath Bhattacharji (alias Biharida), Manindra Nath Mitra (alias Jaleshwar Singh alias Scholar), Nikunja Pal, Khetra Mohan Singh (alias Kartar Singh) and Nalini Bagchi (alias Publisher) were all important and dangerous absconding members of the party from Bhagalpur who were for varying periods in hiding in Bihar where they actively recruited and organized for the party. Nalini Bagchi has since been shot and the remainder are either in jail or interned, having been arrested in Bengal or in this Province. Ranga Lal is still at large and is believed to be in the Province. His identity has not been definitely fixed. S. Q., P. Q. and D. Q. are important members who have made full disclosures. It is necessary to canceal their identity as they are working for the police. Of the various local members outside the Darbhanga district mentioned in this note, the only one at present at large is Bibhanshu Basu who absconded from his domicile a few days ago after having been arrested with certain dangerous revolutionaries in Muzaffarpur and interned at his home. Except Kanhai Lal Banarji, who is interned, none of the Darbhanga members mentioned have as yet been dealt with. Doctor Saheb's identity has not yet been cleared up."

PURNEA

With its very bad road communications, floods and inundations Purnea provided an ideal ground for revolutionary workers, and till the end it remained "more or less an unknown quantity" for the authorities.[22] In 1916 the Bengal Intelligence Branch informed the corresponding authorities in Bihar about the existence of a branch of the Dacca Anushilan Samiti at Purnea. Some cypher papers seized in connection with the Pathurighati case contained reference to the despatch of revolvers and cartridges to Purnea. A letter written by some one in Purnea to Jogesh Chandra Ray, an active member of the Dacca Anushilan Samiti then under arrest in Calcutta, was intercepted in the post. It appeared from the letter that Jogesh Chandra was the man incharge of Purnea-organisation.

Purnea again came under the notice of the authorities in 1919 when one Bishwanath Jha of Khariya (sub-division Araria) was arrested in connection with a number of cases. Bishwanath Jha had left his home at a very young age. He first went to Nattore, served as a cook for many years and then joined the Binodepur H. E. School (in Jessore), from

22 Political (Special Department) File No. 19 of 1919.

which he matriculated in 1914. Then he joined the Daulatpur College, having secured a free studentship there on the recommendation of Hemant Kumar Majumdar, the headmaster of the Binodepur School and a leading revolutionary. At Daulatpur he came under the influence of some leading revolutionaries like Prof. Sarat Ghose, Bhupen Datta, Suren Kushiary (killed in the Armenian street dacoity), Ashu Rai Choudhury and others of the Daulatpur organisation. He also lived with them in the Khajur-bagan Mess at Daulatpur and took part in all their activities. Towards the end of January 1917 he returned to his native village after 11 years, with a view to sotarting a new centre for the Revolutionary party in Bihar. In that connection he visited Banaras and Bhagalpur also. He took up the job of a teacher in the Maheshpur M. E. School (district Bhagalpur.) Meanwhile his activities came under the notice of the authorities and he was arrested on the 9th August, 1917, at Maheshkhal. As his native village, Khariya, was within a mile of Araria police station, it was thought advisable to intern him at home. In the beginning there was some amount of hesitation on the part of the local government to take charge of a revolutionary who was not an "unimportant member of the western Bengal Party,"[23] but at last they yielded, and Bishwanath Jha was sent to Purnea in 1919.

MONGHYR

In 1916 information reached the authorities about the appointment of Sita Ram Bhat, a political suspect from U. P. as the headmaster of the Johnstenganj M. E. School at Shrimatpur (dist. Monghyr). The Inspector of Schools immediately secured his removal from the School. In October, 1918 the Bihar Intelligence Branch reported on the activities of the sub-judge, Satish Chandra Basu of Monghyr. In 1915 when the sub-judge was posted at Patna Thakur Das Babaji had stayed with him for some days. In April 1918 Dr. J. N. Mitra and Thakur Das Babaji, who figured so prominently in the reports of the C. I. D., visited Monghyr and put up with Satish Chandra Basu. In the following month Jogendra Nath Basu came to Monghyr and he also stayed with him. Jogendra Nath Basu was his mother-in-law's brother and a great friend of Bepin Chandra Pal, and other agitators in the early days of the movement in Bengal. Satish Chandra Basu was also found, in the course of investigations into the local revolutionary organisation among the Monghyr students, to have been a close associate of Panna Lal Chakravarti, an active member of the Local party. The Registrar of the Patna High Court, W. H. Boyce, was there-

23 *Ibid.*

fore requested for his transfer "to some station which will be less accessible to his political associates." But the High Court did not agree. The Judges were of opinion that "before taking any steps for the transfer of S. C. Basu, he should be informed of the report made against him and given an opportunity of explaining it...."[24] We do not know as to what action was taken in the case. Next we find that on 17 July 1919 Hari Prasanna Rai Choudhuri and Pratul Mukharji were arrested at Monghyr under the Defence of India Rule. A number of cyclostyled leaflets inciting to murder of Europeans were found in their house. It was decided to deport them from the Province as "the case against them could not have been brought forward in court without exposing the informer and this was judged undesirable."[25]

SUPAUL

The headmaster of the Supaul H. E. School, Manamath Nath Ganguli, was suspected of revolutionary activities. A native of Bhagnapara in the Kalna Sub-division of Bardwan district he was married, at Bhagalpur, to the grand-daughter of Kirti Babu, a prominent pleader. He was the nephew of Radha Kamal Mukherji. His father, Chandra Bhushan Ganguli, was the Superintendent of theCollege Hostel, Berhampur. While at Berhampur he came into contact with the famous revolutionary Tara Khepa alias Tarapad Banarji. He became a link between Tara Khepa and the students of the Hostel. He was reported to have been concerned in the circulation of seditious leaflets at Berhampur in 1913 and 1914. He was well-acquainted with the suspect Hari Mohan Jha of Malda district, who also was reported to have circulated seditious leaflets at Berhampur in 1916. His other associates were Satish Chakravarti (absconder), Amar Nath Banarji and Sisir Kumar Basu of Saidabad. But the authorities could not take action against him in the absence of any positive evidence of "criminal action."

DEOGHUR

During the trial of the Alipore conspiracy case (1908) it was found that the organisers of the plot had used a number of places in Calcutta and elsewere for the purpose of carrying out their revolutionary schemes. One such place was Sil's Lodge, Deoghur, in the district of Santal Paraganas, which "had been hired and used for the preparation of bombs and training of associates."[26] Deoghur was also associated with Barindra Ghose

24 Political (Special) Deptt., File No. 401 of 1918.

25 Pol. (Special) Deptt. File No. 421 of 1919.

26 Indian Sedition Committe Report (1918), p. 87.

and Arbinda Ghose, whose grandfather, Raj Narain Basu, had settled there. Barindra Ghose had his early education at Deoghur itself. There was a political Society, the Golden League, "the object of which was to forward boycott and Swadeshi agitation."[27]

Deoghur High English School was an important centre of revolutionary activities. Early in 1915, the D. P. I. was informed about the admission into the school of Surendra Nath Das, a political suspect from Madaripur (Bengal). Later it was reported that three teachers of the School viz. Sarda Charan Das, Abinash Chandra Guha and Khagendra Chandra Dey, were having connections with an ex-deportee at Giridih. They were also in the habit of attending meetings where "objectionable subjects were discussed".[28] At the suggestions of the D. P. I., the Inspector of Schools secured their removal from the School, and took measures to prevent their employment in any other school in the province. Yet in November 1915, Shanti Kumar Bakshi, a political suspect, could manage to get himself appointed as a teacher in the High School, on the recommendation of the Deputy Superintendent of Police himself, who was a member of the Managing Committee of the School. He was arrested on the 8th September, 1916, and deported from the Province. Later he was again arrested in Bengal under the Defence of India Act.

About this time steps were taken "to break up a clique of Bengali teachers in the Dumka Zila Schools."[29] Some of them had been suspected of extremist tendencies.

The police authorities in Santal Parganas felt very much exercised in 1919 when, much against the wishes of the Government of Bihar and Orissa, Bankim Chandra Roy, a nephew of Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, was sent to Madhupur. Bankim was reading in M. Sc. when he was interned. In a report of 1917 the Bengal Intelligence Branch urged that "this man, who was a custodian of arms, a maker of bombs and was the direct instigator of the crime, should not be allowed the privileges of domicile at any of the places suggested by Sir Ashutosh Mukh rji....."[30] Sir Ashutosh was very anxious to get Bankim trained at one of the agricultural farms in Bengal. Bankim was ultimately released and was allowed to proceed to Madhupur and stay in the house of Sir Ashutosh Mukherji.

27 *Ibid.*

28 Letter No. 349-C, dated 26 Nov. 1915, from the D. P. I. to the Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bihar and Orissa.

29 Letter No. 420, dated 15 Feb. 19 5 from J. G. Jennings, D. P. I., to the Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bihar and Orissa.

30 Political (Special) Department, File No. 232 of 1919

But the government of Bihar and Orissa did not agree to the admission of Bankim Chandra Roy to the agricultural institution either at Sabour or Pusa, because at both places there were already a number of Bengalis. The local police officers were alerted to keep a close watch on him.

Bankim arrived at Madhupur on the 15th September 1919. On the very next day the Superintendent of Police, Santal Paraganas, interviewed him at the house of Sir Ashutosh. He put him several questions to elicit Bankim's views on the current politics. In his reply to the question regarding the Home Rule Movement in India, Bankim "deplored the differences between some of the leaders of the movement, which was due to thirst for individual fame. But he hoped that before long they would recognise the priority of their country's claims over their own selfish aspirations. Once this came about he was sure that the resulting combination would easily secure Home Rule in the form wanted by them". The S. P. formed the impression that Bankim was "bitter against the present form of government".

HAZARIBAGH

The town of Hazaribagh was also considered to be a suitable place by the revolutionaries to carry on their activities. They obtained admission into the local educational institutions. They, however, soon attracted the attention of the intelligence Branch. The D. P. I. was informed about a political suspect, Jagdish Chandra Bhaumik, who had succeeded in obtaining teachership in the St. Columba's Collegiate School at Hazaribagh. The D. P. I. took up the matter with the Principal and secured his removal from the institution in 1915. About this time a member of the Banaras Students Union League, Subodh Chandra Rakshit, was reported to have got himself admitted into the St. Columba's College. He was also removed at the instance of the D. P. I. Kshirode Indu Ghosh, another suspect there, was also turned out shortly after.

In 1916 one Chandidas Chakravarti, who was expelled from the Dacca College for political reasons, applied for admission to the St. Columba's College, which was however refused.

The author of the Freedom Movement in Bihar has referred to the somewhat similar case of Ram Binod Singh, a student of the St. Columba's College, who was interned in the Hazaribagh Jail.[31]

HATHUA

The revolutionaries appear to have gained some foothold at Hathua (dist. Saran) also. We have already referred to the visit of Babaji Thakur

31 Datta, K. K., History of the Freedom Movement in Bihar, p. 137.

Das and Kedar Nath Banarji to Hathua. Early in 1914 two Bengali boys were expelled from the Hathua Raj High School. Their father, an employee of the Hathua Raj, was also dismissed from the Raj service at the instance of the local authorities. Next year the D. P. I. received a report that "a small Bengali boy of 9 years of age in the Hathua Raj High School had repeated in a low voice in class a Bengali anarchist song".[32] The boy was warned.

About the beginning of November, 1913, one Basant Kumar Bhattacharji of Mulchar (P. S. Munshiganj, Dacca) visited Bankipur and Hathua along with his son. They had stayed with the Manager of the Hathu Raj, Debendra Babu. From an intercepted letter it was known that the C. I. D. officers were vainly in search of them, as materials for preparing bombs had been found in their house, in the course of a search.

This brings us to the close of our narrative. But it may be mentioned here that I have not been able to consult all the relevant records on the subject. The statement of Raghubir Singh and Priya Nath Bhattacharya, in particlar, are bound to add greatly to our knowledge of the revolutionary movement in Bihar. Likewise the trial proceedings of the Muzaffarpur Bomb case and the Nimej Assassination case[33] would also help us much in this regard. But the picture would still remain incomplete unless we take the earliest opportunity of meeting with some of the survining leaders of the movement and their associates to know the inside story of the movement. It is however clear from the records studied so far that the movement was thoroughly suppressed by the year 1920. Most of the leaders were arrested and dealt with. Only very few of them succeeded till the last in eluding the grasp of the police. In 1918 a reformatory school for the political detenus was opened at Mahilong near Ranchi. But it did not work satisfactorily and it was closed in September 1919. The majority of the detenus were released on security and the remainder interned in home or foreign domicile.

The movement thus remianed till the end essentially a Bengali movement. The domiciled Bengalis provided the necessary link for the spread of the movement in Bihar. The Bengalis in general were sympathetic towards the movement and they, irrespective of their stations in life, tried to help the movement in their own way. A Bengali station

32 Letter No. 420, dated 15 Feb. 1915, from the D. P. I. to the Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bihar and Orissa.

33 The Registrar of the District Session Judge, Arrah, has informed us that the relevant papers of the case have been destroyed.

Master of the Eastern Bengal State Railway in Purnea was reported to have tried to discourage subscriptions to the Indian Relief Fund "because government had not treated Indians well and favoured Europeans and Eurasians".[34] The Inspector of Police, Jamalpur (Monghyr) reported that Bengalis at that place were distorting the war news and spreading all sorts of rumour against the British government. In Santal praganas rumours were prevalent that low caste people were to be seized for employment as grass cutters and in other menial capacities during the war. The rumours were attributed to local Bengalis. And the Commissioner of Patna had positive evidence that "Bengali Station Master have been over heard reading out aloud news from papers praising the Germans or decrying the British".[35] "Altogether", the Chief Secretary of Bihar reported to the Government of India in his fortnightly report of the 30th September, 1914, "there seems to be some ground for suspecting that the Bengali staffs at railway stations have started a campaign of rumours detrimental to government and their conduct is now being watched in order to obtain sufficient data to justify action, whether legal or disciplinary". The conduct of Bengali Professors like K. N. Mitra and Jadu Nath Sarkar has already been mentioned. We have also referred to the reaction of the great poet Rabindra Nath Tagore when a Bolpur student was arrested in Bhagalpur. When Sir Ashutosh Mukherji moved the Bengal government for the release of his nephew, Bankim Chandra Roy, the following note was recorded which shows that the authorities had their own suspicion about him as well. "His (Bankim's) being a relation of Sir Ashutosh Mukharji recalls the latter's interest in a young German adventure in Calcutta in 1910-11. I happened to know the German in his earlier sober days and was surprised to find him as professor of Philology in the presidency College, Calcutta. He had no diploma, but with the help of Sir Ashutosh and others....he was able to keep his position for several months. It was subsequently discovered, but no publicity was given to it. I met this Young German frequently in Calcutta and knew that he was friendly to Sir Ashutosh, Dr. Rasul and other politicians. I gave Mr. Daly a note about this Young German at the time. If Sir Ashutosh's interest in this man had any political significance it is not surprising that Bankim Chandra Roy is what he is".[36]

34 D. O. 559-c, 28 Oct. 1914, from Chief Secy. to Govt. of Bihar to Home Secy., Govt. of Bihar.

35 Political (Special) Deptt. File No. 289 of 1914.

36 Political (Special) Deptt. File No. 232 of 1919.

But the organisers of the revolutionary movement very well knew that without the active support of the children of the soil the movement could not make much headway in Bihar. They were naturally very anxious to enlist the support of the Bihari students. The following extract from the statement of a student of the T. N. J. College, dated the 29th March, 1917, makes this point very clear. "Rebati frequently talked about the Motherland and told us that we (meaning Biharis) are doing nothing for the sake of Motherland and exhorted me to emulate the students of Bengal. He frequently told me that there is no strong public opinion in Bihar and there are no political leaders. He always told me that we should always be ready to lay down our lives for the sake of the Mother-Country. He told me that the Bengalis committed dacoities not for personal gain but for the welfare of the country. He always advised me to read the accounts of dacoities, political arrests, outrages and house-searches and to think over the matter. In short, he told me that we Biharis should do the same work as is done by the anarchists in Bengal. He pointed out to me that it is not possible for Bengalis to work in Bihar. They (Bengalis) can only educate and instruct the Biharis[37] ....".

But they had hardly penetrated among the Bihari students when the local authorities were alerted by the numerous evidences obtained in connection with the trials of political prisoners in Bengal regarding revolutionary activities in Bihar, and the movement was rather nipped in the bud.

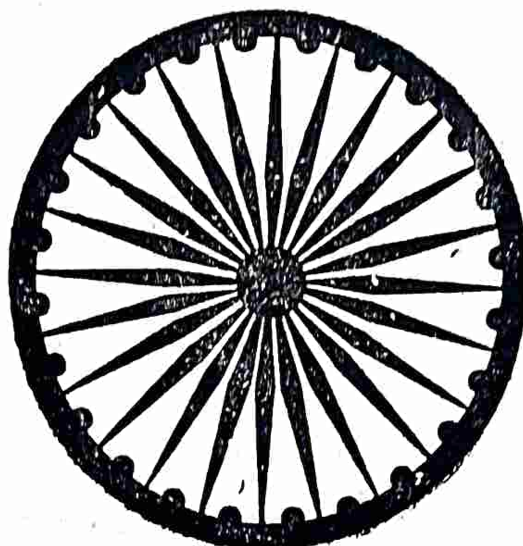
37 Indian Sedition Committe Report (1919), p. 89.

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